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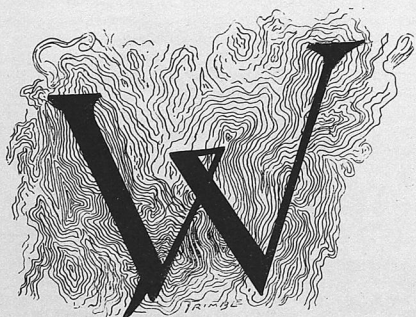
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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



## AMATEUR ART.

BY  
J. CARRUTHERS.

HAT is amateur art? Simply artistic ideas carried out into practice by those who without professionally

devoting themselves to decorative work, aim to accomplish something in this line. Among the tens of thousands of illustrations that we have issued, there are not a few that do credit to the hands and brains of private individuals. The indulgence of the disposition for amateur art is not only a pleasurable employment of time but may be rendered fruitful of good results. There are doubtless countless individuals who might shine in amateur art, whose talents lie unexercised.

### I.

The most prominent of these divertissements is painting, not merely on cardboard or canvass, but on muslin, silk and wood, which may be applied to the adornment of panels of furniture, wainscoting and doors. We have seen a number of rooms thus elegantly enriched with landscape, portrait and other views, mostly in light, subdued colors, and of a sketchy character, but displaying in their collected effect good discriminating taste. The painting on wood particularly should be more practiced. Thin sheets of hard wood may be obtained corresponding to existing panels, and be attached on the completion of the painting by means of gum or glue.

### II.

We would suggest stencilled work, which may be practised on the bare walls of upper rooms, to give them an enlivening effect, or on cheap cottage furniture. To render these stencillings works of art, so far as the painter is concerned, the forms themselves should be originally designed. All that is necessary is to draw them on strong manilla paper, cut them out with a knife and then varnish the paper on both sides with thin shellac, so as to afford the requisite firmness. A series of geometrical designs, suggestive of tiers of porcelain tiles, may be first carried out. The paper thus prepared is applied to the wall, and a stencilling brush called into requisition. To secure sharp outlines of color on the ground it is well to rub over the surface of the varnish with fine sandpaper. The colors themselves are to be mixed to the proper consistence with boiled oil or japan, a little turpentine being added. In the case of wood it may first be treated to a coat of shellac, which serves to fill up the pores of wood, and at the same time affords a stronger hold to the colors. After the prepared stencil plates are used, the figures may be gone over by hand, and borders or shading introduced of suitable tints and hues.

### III.

Carving in wood offers great attractions. Should models be desired of any antique or other carving it is desired to imitate, a compost may be prepared consisting of five parts of bees wax, one part each of suet, olive oil and turpentine. These materials are to be melted, and then being allowed to cool, are pressed on the carvings. The mold is then oiled and filled in with a paste of plaster of Paris and water, brought to the proper consistence. If there are undercuttings the waxy material used to get the impression must be cut through at the proper places with a strong and fine thread. We have lately illustrated in these columns the instruments necessary for carving and explained their use. In carving it is of importance to vary as much as possible the angles of light. Accordingly the lower edge of stems and branches of scrolls are slanted at an angle to the back ground, which may be nearly their own width. Whilst the light is thus increased on one side shadows is introduced by cutting straight down the upper portion of connecting stems and branches. In a rosette the angle of cutting may be varied at different points of edges. In leaves light is graduated by central curves or by incised lines, or the leaves are rendered flat and their ribs raised.

### IV.

Inlaying is an art that may be said to be allied to carving. We do not allude to ordinary inlaying, but to delicate, beautiful and elaborate work. The inlaying we would suggest should be on picture frames, panels, or the tops and sides of boxes, which might be afterwards put together. Many exquisite woods are available. All that is necessary is to cut out a bed for each piece and attach them with glue.

Should pearl be used it is to be applied by a plate of equal parts of tallow and wax put on warm. As easier to work as a bed for inlaid designs we would suggest papier mache; pearl is attached to this by copal varnish.

### V.

In glass painting may be found another pleasurable exercise of artistic taste. We may suggest a mode of carrying out a flower design. Provide a ground of cold blue. The leaves are made a warm green. The stem color in shades of brown may be blended into the leaves, which produces a good effect. The leaf color is mixed from white, chrome green and yellow ochre, and a touch of black to subdue it. The stem color is mixed from yellow ochre, burnt sienna, with a touch of burnt umber. Dark colors introduced for subduing brilliancy should be very sparingly used. The flowers may be pink from carmine, zinc white and vermilion, equal parts, with a little yellow in the centre. In place of pink, white or buff color may be used, the latter from white and Naples yellow. The buff should have cold green leaves mixed from ochre, green and blue, stems reddish brown. All that is necessary to make the water colors adhere is to mix with them a limited amount of gum.

### VI.

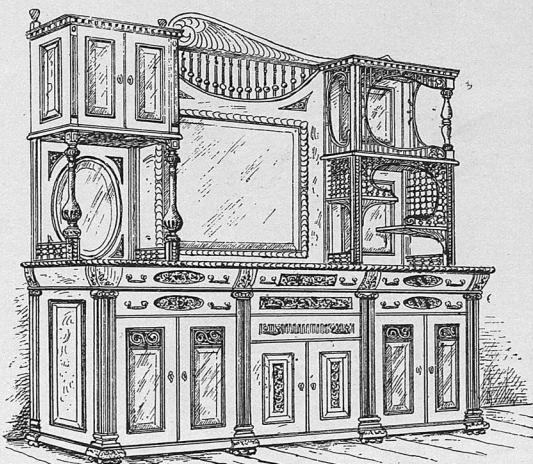
The stringing of beads and agatised glass pipes on wires attached to a rod to serve as a window shade is quite a ladylike employment. The perfection of the art is to so arrange the pieces as to exhibit flowers and stalks, all the more attractive from the wavy motion given to the whole by every breath of air and by the play of light and shade, the fine wires being left pendent and not attached below.

### VII.

Painting on china ware is an increasingly fashionable occupation with ladies. The surface of the ware is first to be covered with a thin film of turpentine and the design, on tissue or other thin paper, is attached by gum at the corners. Between the design and the surface of the ware is a piece of black lead transfer paper. The design is gone over with a tracer, the filmy glaze receiving the impression. The metallic oxides used for coloring are ground down with fusible glass. It is easy to obtain a list of the metallic oxides suitable for firing, the others being unable to resist the intense heat without volatilizing.

### VIII.

Etching on crown glass is a very simple process. The glass is first heated in a sand bath, and then rubbed over with purified bees wax, the temperature of the glass being such as to cause the wax to melt completely and uniformly over its surface. The plate is then set aside to cool. A paper having a design boldly drawn upon it is then attached to the unwaxed side of the glass, and the lines of the drawing are traced through the wax by a pointed instrument, care being taken that the point clears all the wax from the glass wherever the design comes. This done, some coarsely powdered fluor spar is to be placed in a vessel together with a quantity of sulphuric acid, well mixed together, and as soon as they are incorporated the glass is placed over the vessel, the wax surface downwards, and a moderate degree of heat applied to the bottom of the vessel. The fumes of fluor acid soon arise and attack the surface of the unprotected portion of the glass. In half an hour it may be removed, and the wax scraped off, leaving the design perfectly etched on the surface of the glass.



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